WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Technical personnel of FSI in IOTC

2604. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Fishery Survey of India has deputed its technical personnel to work on a part-time basis with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC);

(b) if so, the terms of such agreements and benefits accruing to India from such arrangements; and

(c) whether the Central Government is monitoring the independent way the Fishery Survey of India is developing relationships with a foreign organization?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Fishery Survey of India (FSI) being a Government of India subordinate office has been functioning under the administrative control of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture. The activities of the FSI have been monitored by the Central Government and no independent relationships are developed by FSI with any foreign organization.

MSP for animals

2605. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to fix Minimum Support Price for the animals like buffaloes, sheep, goat, etc;

(b) whether Government know that traders exploit the farmers who rear these animals by buying their products at throwaway prices; and

(c) how can Government help the farmers to get right price for their animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Madam.

(b) It has been reported by a number of committees that moneylenders and traders exploit small ruminant farmers.

(c) Introduction of a system of selling animals on liveweight basis is likely to improve profit margin of farmers. Improving access to credit will keep needy farmers out of the strangle hold of moneylenders.

Meeting of CM's with NDC Sub-committee

2606. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Ministers of several States discussed ways to reverse the slow down in the growth of the agriculture sector at a meeting held with National Development Council sub-committee on Agriculture and related issues;

(b) whether Chief Ministers were of the view that Central and States needed to put in more efforts to attract private investment in agricultural marketing activities;

(c) whether to boost private agricultural marketing, the sub-committee has recommended doing away with the provisions like levy, control on movement, transportation, storage and marketing of agricultural produce under the Essential Commodities Act; and

(d) whether Government have accepted the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) A meeting of National Development Council (NDC) was held on 29.5.2007 to consider issues concerning the agriculture sector.

(b) Yes, Sir. Several Members of the NDC, which include *inter-alia* Chief Ministers, emphasized the need to attract more private investment in agricultural marketing activities.

(c) The NDC's Working Group on Marketing Reforms, Contract Farming and the Agro Processing Sector has recommended dispensing with legal provisions relating to levy control on movement, transportation, storage and marketing of agricultural produce under the Essential Commodities Act.

(d) The Government is already pursuing reforms in the agricultural marketing sector by encouraging states to amend laws which put restrictions on movement transportation, storage, marketing of agricultural produce and private investment in agricultural marketing infrastructure.

Preservation of local seeds

2607. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) as the local seeds are disappearing what steps are being planned to preserve all varieties of local seeds; and

(b) why the farmers are being discouraged to use the local seeds and to exchange them with other farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), New Delhi is collecting, conserving and documenting the germplasm of crop plants including seeds of local landraces/farmer's varieties in National Genebank as also under the provisions of Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmer's Rights Act (PPV and FR Act), 2001. The National Genebank presently holds more than 3.50 lakh accessions of over 1,200 crop/plant species.

(b) The Seeds Act, 1966, Seeds Rules, 1968 and PPV and FR Act, 2001 do not restrict farmers to use and exchange local seeds among them for sowing purposes. Farmers/ farming communities are/shall be recognized in respect of their contribution for conserving, improving and making available plant genetic resources for the development of new plant varieties under the provisions of PPV and FR Act, 2001. However, improved varieties/hybrids of crops are also being promoted to get higher yield and quality in crops.